DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 049 489 CG 006 298

AUTHOR Oltman, Ruth M.
TITLE The Evolving Role of the Women's Liberation Movement in Higher Education.
INSTITUTION American Association of Univ. Women, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 15 Mar 71
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the American Association of University Women Convention in Chicago, Illinois, March, 1971

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Educational Equality, Employment, *Females, *Feminism, *Higher Education, Professional Training, *Social Discrimination, *Womens Education

ABSTRACT

While increasing numbers of women are attending college today, their professional opportunities remain limited and many types of discrimination exist. A major thrust to improve the role of women in academe is developing from diverse sources and one of these efforts is a survey conducted by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) to document aspects of the role of women in higher education. Of AAUW's member institutions, 454 responded to a questionnaire which explored personnel policies affecting women, special programs designed for mature women students, women's participation in decision making, utilization of women's abilities in major offices and committees, and general attitudes of administration regarding women. Results support the growing data that women do not have equal status with men in academe. At every level - student body, administration, faculty, and trustees - women are under-represented or placed in positions with little power. Institutional and organizational policies which may contribute to discrimination or hinder professional development should be identified and changed. Active recruitment of women for administrative and faculty positions should be encouraged. Only then can women realize their professional potential. (RSM/Author)

ED049489

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Paper presented at
26th Annual AAHE Conference
Chicago, Ill.
March 15, 1971
by Dr. Ruth M. Oltman
Staff Associate - Higher Education
A.A.U.W.

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

When the University of Michigan opened its doors to women in 1870, after 15 years of painful debate and soul-searching, it was regarded as "a very dangerous experiment . . . certain to be ruinous to the young ladies who should avail themselves of it . . . and disastrous to the institution." President Tappan had written a few years earlier that "men will lose as the women advance, we shall have a community of defeminated women and demasculated men. When we attempt to disturb God's order we produce monstrosities." Yet in 1870 coeducation already had been in effect at Oberlin for 33 years, at Hillsdale and Antioch Colleges for 18, and at six other universities. The university's own original statute establishing it in 1837 stated that "it shall be open to all persons who possess the requisite literary and moral qualifications." Women, apparently, were not regarded for some time as "persons" in the academic world, any more than they were so regarded under the 14th Amendment for many years thereafter. Meanwhile, a few women's colleges had been established and later women were added to the student body in men's colleges by creating separate but parallel women's colleges such as Radcliffe (1879), Pembroke (1891), and Barnard (1893). Even then it took 15 years for Radcliffe to become a degree-granting institution; Harvard diplomas were not given until 1963.

Much has happened in the 100 years since the first women, Madelon Stockwell, entered Michigan to become, as she described it, "the target of curious stares and pointed fingers." The community was hostile at first. Finding a room to rent was difficult for women students and initially they were not even welcome at the local churches. The history of women's education and of the women's movement in general

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has been tied in closely with some of the major social causes of the century, in which women have always been active - slavery, civil rights, welfare, and laws on marriage, divorce, property, abortion, etc. The renewed emphasis on humanistic values in modern society and the forces challenging authority and relevance are creating a catalytic climate for the "second revolution."

Today, through the legal efforts of WEAL, Human Rights for Women and NOW, a major attack has begun against the institutions of higher education at which proven sex discrimination exists. Without an Equal Rights Amendment, with no protection under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as little support from prior court testing of the 14th Amendment, these academic cases have had to be prosecuted by HEW under Executive Order No. 11246 of 1967, which obligates government contractors to comply with the principle of equal pay and with prohibition against sex discrimination.

Forces from many diverse groups are creating pressures which are building up to necessary action. It will take time to change attitudes; meanwhile, there are very obvious differentials and inequities which need to be remedied at once. It is possible that changes in academic structure can in themselves create new attitudes. However, as long as the organization and policies of higher education support discriminatory practices, attitudes are unlikely to change greatly for there is no channel to route new behavioral approaches.

The growth during the past two years of women's caucuses, commissions, or committees among the professional associations has been phenomenal--one might call it a "revolution within." And these groups are achieving some amazing results, taking their parent associations along with them, sometimes with considerable support financial and otherwise, sometimes with some reluctance or even hostility, and frequently with differing views among women members. But the growing awareness among professional women of the lack of professional acceptance and recognition in many areas has created some strong mutually supportive groups. That they are being heard

is evidenced by the resolutions they have succeeded in getting passed at their annual conventions; by the increasing number of women elected or appointed to their governing bodies; by the research support granted; and finally, by the reactivation of the committee on the status of women, Committee W, within AAUP itself.

The fall issue of the AAUP Bulletin carries a well-documented paper by Ann Sutherland Harris, of Columbia University, entitled "The Second Sex in Academe." The objective data contained in this paper cannot be but a powerful indictment of what higher education has done to women--as undergraduate and graduate students, as faculty, and as administrators. The role which the AAUP committee sees for itself is one of active participation in the formation of Association policy, as well as educational in developing data and information. Committee W and Committee A of AAUP have just released a very strong statement against existing nepotism regulations, as you know.

Organization of the different groups varies greatly--from a separate association related to but not a part of a parent group (such as the Association of Women in Psychology) to a commission, subcommittee or section within the association (such as the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession), to caucuses organized independently but attempting to work within the association, as members, for desirable change (as the Women's Caucus of APSA). At its convention last December, the ASA established an ad hoc committee on the status of women in sociology, as well as an academic section on sex roles in Society which will sponsor sessions at next year's convention. The caucus, which previously acted as a lobby of members, now has become a separate organization known as Sociologists for Women in Society.

There is some male support for the work of these groups and, in the case of the Modern Language Association, the committee's research has been financed by the Association; several committee members are men. Their panels at convention have been well attended by both men and women. Many resolutions have been given sound support,

although not always translated, as yet, into the policy of the association. Newsletters and journal articles are spreading the information and fostering the exchange of ideas and projects.

It is interesting to note developments in two organizations which are predominantly female - the ALA and ASHA. Seventy-five percent of the membership of ALA is made up of women, yet of the 85 presidents only 16 (including the present one) have been women and only 47% of the Council are women. When the ASHA caucus was formed at convention last November there were no women on the Executive Board and only one-fourth of the legislative council were women, although 74% of the members are women. Remedying the problem of representation, therefore, is one of the major functions of these two groups.

There appears to be little caucus activity among the scientific associations we surveyed - namely, National Association of Biology Teachers, the Mathematical Association of America, American Mathematical Society, American Association of Physics Teachers and American Association for the Advancement of Science. The last, however, did have a lively symposium on "Women in Science" at its 1970 meeting and elected its first woman president for 1971. The American Chemical Society has had a Women's Service Committee since 1927, which has concern for retraining opportunities for women and solicits funds for an annual award to an outstanding woman chemist.

Each group has attempted first to determine the facts and then to define programs. For example, the APSA Committee on Status of Women in the Professions has been conducting a survey of its members to:

1) determine potential supply and recruitment of women in the profession
2) develop socio-economic data, comparing men and women
3) assess effects of competing social roles of women
4) identify limitations on opportunities as factors affecting performance of women
5) ascertain self-perception of women as related to their professional role choices and perceptions of those roles
6) satisfactions and rewards - material and psychological

It is also holding hearings on campuses and at professional meetings.

Armed with the facts, these groups can then seek, as they are doing, support for:

1) relevant changes in curriculum
2) more active recruitment of women in the profession
3) more equitable distribution of graduate stipends
4) more equitable policies on promotion and salaries
5) day-care centers on campus
6) abolition of nepotism rules
7) new policies on maternity leave and part-time status
8) special courses on the role of women in our society. Many of these courses are being taught during 1970-71, most for credit, in the departments of history, psychology or sociology

One should not overlook the studies of professional women on individual campuses - notably Columbia, the University of Minnesota, the University of California, SUNY Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and many others. These also have made substantial contributions to improvements in the status of women in academe. Female students, too, have joined the force, as the Intercollegiate Association of Women Students (IAWS) has formed its own commission to examine their roles in the academic community. Where the traditional women's self-government organizations have been abolished or perished from institutional malnutrition, women's lib groups have sprung up to further the cause for their special needs as students.

It is to the credit of the women working in this movement, I firmly believe, that they have been quite objective in their approach to the problems of discrimination. They are establishing research committees, developing facts, and <u>then</u> presenting their cases - this is a long way from the standard media depiction of women's libbers as bra burners, "hate men" advocates or Lesbians.

It was in this spirit of inquiry and of finding out what <u>was</u> really happening to women on campus that we began our AAUW survey a year ago, tapping areas which would provide a comprehensive picture of women at all levels in academe - students, faculty, administrators and trustees. Our Committee on Standards in Higher Education recognized that very little data is available to document the role of women in higher education and that if any improvement is to be achieved much more information must be obtained. The need for such data is evident by the great activity

within the professional groups and campuses which we have just described. Yet surprisingly few government and educational organizations include data analysis by sex in the statistics they publish, thus obscuring facts which would be evident if such differential data were given. One of the recommendations of the President's Task Force on the Status of Women was that "all agencies of the Federal Government that collect economic or social data about persons should collect, tabulate, and publish results by sex as well as race."

The AAUW questionnaire on the role of women on campus was sent to the 750 colleges and universities which hold institutional membership in AAUW in January 1970. Questions explored participation of women in decision-making; personnel policies affecting hiring, promotion, maternity leave and nepotism; special programs designed for mature women students; utilization of women's abilities in major offices and committeees, as department heads, principal administrators, and trustees; and general attitudes of administration regarding women. Of the 750 institutions surveyed, 454 or about two-thirds returned the questionnaire. Those replying are broadly representative of the nation's colleges, although the AAUW sample has a larger percentage of public institutions and schools with over 10,000 enrollment and a smaller percentage of private schools and schools with enrollments under 5,000.

In evaluating the findings, it is important to keep in mind that women students in the fall of 1969 comprised about 41% of the total student population in four-year colleges and universities in the United States. Almost 2,400,000 women were enrolled in degree-credit programs in 1969-70. Nationally women comprise about 18.4% of all faculty (last figures from 1965-66 NEA report), although the percentage was 25% in 1950 and 28% in 1940. Only 9.4% of the women hold the rank of full professor, however, as compared to 24.5% of the men, and the percentage of women faculty increases sharply as rank decreases (e.g. 34.8% are instructors, as compared to 16.3% men). They are particularly absent at some of the "prestige" institutions and often are employed in non-tenured or part-time positions. There

is a conspicuous lack of women in administrative positions or as trustees in higher education.

Results of the survey add to the increasing accumulation of data that women do not have equal status with men in academe. At every level - student body, administration, faculty, and trustees - women are under-represented or placed in positions with little power in decision-making. This is particularly true in the large public institutions. When they are represented, it is more often in the smaller or women's colleges where there is a shortage of men and when they have special skills in specific areas which have sex stereotypes (e.g. dean of home economics).

Opinion or policy does not always equate with fact - e.g. 90% of the schools state that their promotional policies are the same for men and women faculty, yet in 34 schools (all coeducational) there are no women department heads and the mean number of women department heads in all schools is less than three per institution. Ninety-two percent stated that they do include women in top-level administrative positions. Yet women administrators are seldom employed in positions involving critical decision making and are not actively recruited at higher levels. In this period of increased student involvement in campus governance, 43% indicated that women students are represented in proportionately smaller numbers than men on student-staff committees. Forty-six percent indicated that during the past year they had had no programs related to the special educational needs of women on campus.

The study was, of necessity, a very general one, attempting to define the extent of women's involvement on campus and to create an awareness of discrimination where it may exist. Results point to a number of unanswered questions indicating need for further study in depth such as, for example, maternity policies for faculty women. They illustrate in a rather dramatic fashion the sex inequities on American campuses and suggest many areas in which the utilization of women could be increased at all levels in academe. The major areas indicated for action now are:

1) development of more opportunities for women students in genuine leadership positions and participation in campus governance

2) development of better counseling and more programs specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of women students, including the mature students

3) recruitment and employment of more women in administrative positions on campus and greater participation in higher level policy making

4) appointment or election of more women trustees, particularly in coeducational schools and the large public institutions

5) improvement in recruitment of women for faculty and in promotional policies for faculty women, and examination of institutional policies which may contribute to covert or overt discrimination

6) elimination of regulations against nepotism in hiring and adoption of clear policies of employment on the basis of merit and training

7) establishment of clear maternity policies for all faculty women

8) the development by all government agencies and educational organizations of professional statistics showing clear designations of data for men and women

Other areas not covered by the study but which should be examined are:

1) the recruitment of women for graduate schools - necessitating a close look at how women are motivated and counseled in their undergraduate years

2) the incentives offered to women in the way of stipends for graduate study

3) quotas or limitations placed on admission of women to graduate schools

4) the employment of college women after graduation - breadth of opportunity, training, salaries

5) the establishment of criteria related to the full participation of women on campus in the accreditation of institutions of higher learning

Jo Freeman's dissenting statement in the University of Chicago report on women at that institution expresses very succinctly the core of the problem:

> "As long as the University does not concern itself with the variety of life styles prevalent among academic women and the many needs they have that differ from those of men, it will inevitably discriminate against otherwise qualified women. The life styles of the population of intelligent highly educated women are much more

> heterogeneous than those of intelligent, highly educated men. The University is geared to serve the needs of the latter and those of the former group who most closely resemble these men or who can organize their lives, however uncomfortably, into the environment created for intelligent, highly educated men. Failure to realize that women as a group have a wider diversity of life styles than men as a group will result in an exclusion of those women whose life styles least resemble those of men."

Once that diversity is fully recognized and institutional policies and organization adapted accordingly, higher education as a whole will benefit greatly, as well as both the men and women in it. The needs are clearly established. Courageous leadership is imperative in assisting women in higher education to realize their potential and to make their maximum contribution to the academic community. Then it can no longer be said, as stated in 1959 by Caplow and McGee in "The Academic Marketplace":

> "Women scholars are not taken seriously and cannot look forward to a normal professional career . . . Women tend to be discriminated in the academic profession not because they have low prestige but because they are outside the prestige system entirely."

Improvement in the role of women thus has become one of the major aspects of the increasing humanistic concerns of modern society. It is hard to understand why it has taken so long for women's rights as individuals to be recognized, for the problem is so entwined with social developments and political structures. It is particularly difficult to understand why higher education has not taken the leadership in this movement or why it has required government action to force comliance with law and with the spirit of fairness and dignity of human relationships - for which there is no sex factor.